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A
DISSERTATION,
OR
DISCOURSE,
ON
SUICIDE;

GROUNDLED ON THE IMMOVEABLE FOUNDATION OF
SCRIPTURAL,
RATHER THAN OF
PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES.

WHEREIN ALSO, OCCUR,
Several incidental weighty CONSIDERATIONS,

SUGGESTED BY THE
CRITICAL STATE of our own TIMES:
Which therefore (it is humbly hoped) may be of *some*
PRACTICAL Use to the present Generation.

REFUGIUM MISERIS—IESUS.

JESUS, the Refuge of the Distressed.

NORTHAMPTON:

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DISSERTATION.


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DISCOVER

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GROUPED ON THE IMMEDIATE RIGHT OF THE



PHILOSOPHY

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THE VETERAL INCIDENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE

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CRITICAL STATE of our TIMES

Wright, Thomas H.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

УДК 62-50:62-50:62-50

Issue, the Role of the District

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A
DISSERTATION, or DISCOURSE,
ON
S U I C I D E, &c.

SUICIDE, whether the Result of cool, deliberate, and avowed Principle, or precipitated by raging, thoughtless Distress, must, in both Cases, self-evidently appear, within every uncorrupted Heart, and unbribed Conscience, to be a GREAT SIN; a Sin against God, our Neighbour, and our Ourselves: Though, as in Sins of every other Kind, it be one much more aggravated in the former, than in the latter Case. A SPECIES it is of MURDER, horribly unnatural; and whereas all MURDER, without Discrimination, has been declared by our Saviour himself, to come out [of the evil Treasure] of the Heart, assuredly THIS deserveth a Man. (Matt. xii. 35. xv. 18--20. compared with Eph. iv. 29. 1 Joh. iii. 15.

Whatever an ingenious, but depraved REASON may be able to alledge in Vindication of this Sin; yet may all, I think, be put upon Elijah's plain Issue in another Case: (1 Kings xviii. 21.)—Either NATURE is GOD; or the LORD is GOD.

If that visible System, or animated State of Things, we commonly call NATURE, were God;—if the Life we now consciously possess does not reside in an invisible spiritual Subject; a Principle, as entirely distinct from, and independent of its material Body, as the TRUE GOD (declared Joh. iv. 24. to be a SPIRIT) must needs, on that very Account, be distinct from, and independent of the visible, and

material System of Nature;—If *this* Life, with all its Sensations and Reflections, were not the gracious *Gift* of God's own *Free-Will* and *immediate* Operation; but, either some wonderful Quality, or Property, the mere Result and Aggregate of a certain casual and lucky Concurrence, and Organization of Atoms and Particles, altogether material; or of the Course of *NATURE*, chimerically and absurdly supposed to have been from Eternity, *self-existent*, and *self-prolific*, as *now* it appears to be; lighting up this Taper of Life, under various Forms and Degrees, at one Time, and soon extinguishing it again at another:—Were *this*, or any other such like Brain-sick HYPOTHESIS true: (which, by the Way, is at Bottom only intended, and devised to shut the true God out of his own World, and to invalidate and deny the *natural* and *necessary* IMMORTALITY of the Soul;)—then must the whole Affair of a *Religion*, proper for Man, be calculated solely for the *present* Life, without any the least farther Regard, and Prospect beyond the Horizon of this World. *Let us eat and drink, for To-morrow we die* (1 Cor. xv. 32.) would, on this Supposition, be a capital, interesting, and leading *Maxim* for Man, the first, and most comprehensive Article of his Religion. And though, during the short and fleeting Period of our supposed *casual* Existence, the Pomp and Show of PUBLIC WORSHIP, under some agreeable and delectable Form or other, might still be kept up, as a proper Mixture and Amusement in Life;—though VIRTUE, and MORALITY, as necessary Means for individual, and for social Happiness might be adopted, praised, and even enforced; yet could there be no real, *intrinsic* Obligation incumbent upon Man beyond *that*, which an *extrinsic* Civil Authority presumed also to be the *mere* Creature of his own private, personal Welfare, Ease, and Good-Pleasure) might render it circumstantially *expedient*

pedient for him to submit to.—And thus would the *predicted* last Edition of the most *refined* IDOLATRY come forth; every Man being thus, in Effect, a LITTLE DEITY to himself, whilst his own *independent* Will is the one-only, and *supreme* LAW to him.

Let it also be here noted, by the Way, that this *Scheme* is, in its original Ground, the Offspring of Hell, and hath forged those *Chains of Darknefs*, with which all the *fallen Angels* are bound; and with which they wish to fetter all *human Creatures* too. Choosing to be their own Center and Circumference, they disdain God, and are all in all to themselves.—For this might pertinent Scriptures be easily here adduced:—But beware of this *portentous* grand Error of *these last Times*, all ye, who love and fear the true, the living, and the *supernatural* God of Heaven and Earth! (2 Pet. ii. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 4. Rev. xiii. 4. Dan. xi. 36, 37. Chap. vii. 24, 25.)

On these, and such like Principles of modern ATHEISM, NATURALISM, or DEISM, to which, for above a Century past, all seems to be every Day more and more tending, and converging, as into its proper *Focus*; an occasional SUICIDE might certainly, amidst a Variety of supposable Cases, be deemed as lawful, as it would be then *personally* expedient. For if a Life, thus *casually* lighted up, and devolved upon us, should, before its natural Course of Extinction, become, by the *same blind Chance*, more bitter than sweet;—should it even become so intolerably burdensome, as to be worse than none at all;—should there be also no *Hope* left of ever seeing the sad and dismal Scene shifted, and succeeded by some diversified, brighter, and more cheering Face of Things;—in a Situation so distressful and embarrassing as this, what could a few more Hours, Days, Weeks, or even Years, do farther for us, than only to prolong and perpetuate a most miserable Existence? And, thus circumstanced, it would

naturally appear to be our Interest in the highest Degree to put a *final Period* to it, by some Expedient and Engine of Destruction, as easy, speedy, and effectual in the Nature of it, as human Intellect could devise, Opportunity furnish, and the Power and Resolution of Man set at Work.—The Possibility of this State of Things, and of so desperate a *Dilemma*, the following Scriptures, as well as common Life, evince sufficiently.

Wherefore is Light given to him that is in Misery, and Life unto the bitter in Soul? Which long for Death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid Treasures? Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they find the Grave? Why is Light given to a Man, whose Way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in? For my Sighing cometh before I eat, &c. (Job iii. 20--24.)

And Death shall be chosen rather than Life, by all the Residue of them that remain of this evil Family, &c. (Jer. viii. 3.)

And in those Days shall Men seek Death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and Death shall flee from them. (Rev. ix. 6.)

But, even so, what a wretched *Alternative* is this! For all living Creatures, from Top to Bottom in the Scale of Existence, being once possessed of Life, are, in a right State of Things, plainly found, in Fact, to be so amazingly tenacious of its precious Gift, as to be willing, at any Rate, to secure its Preservation and Continuance. We all naturally dread the very Idea of *Non-Existence*: We shudder at, and shrink from any *Means* of the Deprivation, Abolition, or Extinction of our Life. In which Respect, the greatest of all *Liars* has once, however, given his Attestation to this *Truth* of Fact; when (Job ii. 4.) he says, *Skin for Skin, yea all that a Man hath will he give for his Life.* Were therefore

therefore the voluntary, violent Extinction of our BEING *possible*, and the *least* of *two Evils*; (neither of which is, in Reality, the Case) yet, even so, must it confessedly be *One extremely great*.—Very certainly is it then a Scheme dreadful to plan DELIBERATELY, and to contemplate *beforehand*; nor can the desperate Resolution, necessary for putting it *afterwards* into Execution, be considered as any Way less, but much more dreadful.—However therefore the RASH ACT may be previously qualified and palliated in Order to, and at, its Execution; without Doubt it must still be allowed to remain, among Horribles, Something extremely horrible, to the boldest, and most hardened Soul, that ever yet resided in, and actuated an human Body.

And, under such a View of Man's State of Existence here, well might he wish, that this *chimerically self-existent*, and *prolific* NATURE (for why should she not be *feigned* capable of VOLITION too?) had spared him any Existence at all: Seeing that, in Fact, it is *always* found more or less alloyed and checkered with *Evil*; and, before its final Extinction in the ordinary Course of Things, may, in *too many* Instances, *often* appear (as hath been already observed) almost purely and insupportably so.

This now is, and *must* be the State of the Case upon the mere *Heathenish* Principles of old *Greece* and *Rome*: Nor can it be otherwise upon the more refined and improved Ones of a much prevailing modern, and modish INFIDELITY of different Kinds and Degrees.*

But, God be for ever praised for the illuminating and

* As a Proof, and Illustration of the foregoing Reflections, my Reader is earnestly recommended to a careful Perusal of "VOLTAIRE'S lately published MEMOIRS of his own Life, written by himself." Page 174--180. Also, 43, 61--63, 89--91, 134, 135, 224, 225.

and cheering Sun of *divine* REVELATION!—For *this*, by its superior Lustre, has dissipated all the obscuring Vapours and Fogs, both of old *Heathen* Mythological FICTION, and of modern *falsely-philosophical*, refined REASONING; enabling us with the most solid, and even *intuitive* Evidence and Conviction, to assert, that a LIVING GOD there is, whose Name is JEHOVAH; a God as distinct from, as he is superior to Universal Nature. According to the Accounts in the infallible Revelation he has mercifully given us of himself; being one as complete as could be made by Words, and which the happy Experience, and living Testimony of a thousand, and ten thousand ancient and modern faithful Disciples and Witnesses of the blessed Jesus have verified and confirmed in Power, even with their own Blood:—This God, the LORD, called in Scripture by the Names of the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*, is indubitably an immense Ocean of all actual, conceivable, and possible Perfection and Beatitude; HE is the triune Source of it all; and, in one Word, a GOD of LOVE is HE; (1 John iv. 8, 16.) who, moved only by the most *benevolent* Desire of communicating Something out of the Infinitude of his own Felicity, did, of his *own sovereign Good-Will*, give Existence to a numberless Number of differently graduated Creatures; and of Course, the Life each of us now stands consciously possessed of. For HIS *Pleasure* alone, *we*, and *all Things* beside, *are and were created*. (Rev. iv. 11. John i. 13. Jam. i. 18.) *A Man can receive Nothing, except it be given him from Heaven*. (John iii. 28) To the *least*, as well as to the *greatest*, to *one*, as well as to *all*, HE is, to every real Intent and Purpose, *completely* God and Father; the great Creator, in whom all his *Offspring* live, move and have their Being, from the Beginning to this very Day. (Acts xvii. 28. Nothing can escape his Eye and

and Notice; Nothing can be beyond the Verge of his most minute providential Direction, were it even a young Raven, a paltry Sparrow, or a more insignificant Hair of our Head. (Job xxviii. 41. Psal. cxlviii. 9. Matt. x. 29, 30.) How should it be otherwise, seeing that out of him, (ἐξ αὐτοῦ) and through him, and to him are all Things? (Rom. xi. 36.) Nor is the least Thing, that is made, made without him; the WORD, which was made Flesh.* (John i. 3, 14.)

Well may it be also supposed, that the Work must have done Honour to the all-wise, all-powerful, all-good, all-true, and gracious Workman. Divine Revelation concurs likewise to assure us expressly of the Fact: God saw every Thing, that he had made; and, behold! it was very good. (Gen. i. 31. Eccl. iii. 11.) The present universal Mixture of GOOD and EVIL was no original State of the Creation; but it came in afterwards, not from God, but through the fallen Angels, and fallen Man's own Default. Like God himself, the intelligent Creature, and Man in particular, was, and could not but be, at first, perfectly free in his Will; and he had, withal, been sufficiently warned of the infallibly fatal Consequence of his own Disobedience and Transgression. Sin and Misery are naturally and necessarily so connected, that they must stand or fall together. As to Man's two constituent Parts, his outward BODY, and his inward SOUL, (the one, as it were the Sheath, or Case of the other) the former was made out of the Dust of the Ground; and the latter breathed into his Nostrils, as a Breath of Lives, by God himself. (Gen. ii. 7.) Each of them therefore, even in its present State of intimate Union, partakes of the true Nature of its respective Original. The Body having been taken out

* Vid. 1 Cor. xi. 12. Τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ὡς περ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός.

out of the Dust of the Ground, is, in Consequence of Transgression, sentenced to return to its primitive Dust: (Gen. iii. 19, 23.) Whereas the Soul, being a Breath, a Spark of Deity, (*divinae particula auræ. Hor.*) must return to its Origin likewise. Solomon expressly tells us this, (Eccl. xii. 7.) *Then shall the Dust return to the Earth, as it was; and the Spirit shall return to God, who gave it.*

The SUBJECT, or GROUND of Man's Life, viz. the Spirit or Soul, brought into a State of absolutely dependent, separate, and distinct Existence from the alone Self-existent and independent Creator; is, however, in all other Respects, essentially *his own Image and Likeness*. (Gen. i. 26, 27.) It is therefore now as *naturally-immortal*, as its Father. (Heb. xii. 9.) The Gift unspeakable can never be retracted; it must needs remain a *Grant*, henceforth, as irrevocable and irreversible, as the great and generous Donor is necessarily *unchangeable, and without Repentance, in all the eternal Purposes of his own blessed Will*. (Num. xxiii. 19. Rom. xi. 29. Eph. i. 11. Chap. iii. 11.)—Let me then once more repeat the important, comfortable, and irrefragable Truth, that, by the unalterable *sovereign Good-Will* of God, the Soul of Man, being of such an high Descent, is in its own Nature, *immortal*; and of Consequence, in Point of Duration, henceforth as *eternal* too as its Creator and Father himself. *I know*, says the wise Man (Eccl. iii. 14.) *that whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever; Nothing can be put to it, nor any Thing taken from it.*

Amazing it is, that, against Bible-Principles, corroborated and confirmed by common Sense and the plainest Appearances of universal Nature, the strange Conceit of any possible ANNIHILATION of God's Works could have ever been either piously, or philosophically adopted! *Omnia mutantur, nihil interit.*

interit. Φύσις ἄδενός ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ μόνον μίξις τε, διάλλαξις τε μιγέντων. The *Forms* of Things may alter; but their *Essences*, once given by a God *unchangeable*, cannot be retracted afterwards; and must therefore remain, in Duration, co-eval with the great Giver himself. *Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning of the World.* [ἂν' αἰῶνος, from Eternity] (Acts xv. 18.) What then could render the great and good Creator fickle and inconstant in his own divine Purposes? *God is not a Man, that he should lie; neither the Son of Man, that he should REPENT.* (Num. xxiii. 19.) Men also, and Devils, are all limited by him in their creaturely Capacities, and in their Influences, and Operations. And in Fact, we find before our Eyes, that the utmost, which the most potent Men, can, under divine Permission, in their highest Spheres of Activity, do; is only superficially to affect the *Forms*, but never to annihilate the *Essences* of Things. If this be visibly true of imperfect *Matter* in its degenerate State, how much more must it be true of invisible, and consummately perfect *Spirit*?—Man, by an Abuse, or by a perverse and unnatural Exercise of the essentially necessary *Liberty* of his own Will, may indeed wonderfully alter the *Manner* of his own Existence in his God; but can never, for that very Reason, extinguish and destroy the *Ground*, or *Essence* of that Existence itself. As soon might Water, by its natural Powers, force itself up higher than the Level of its own Source: As soon also might God be supposed to have given the intelligent Creature Faculties capable of defeating and destroying himself, the great Creator.

And, with Respect to an *Annihilation* of our own Existence by the Act of *SUICIDE*, can we seriously and rationally suppose, that the amazingly noble *Spirit*, the inward Principle, which warms, enliven,

livens, and actuates the Body; resolute and vigorous enough, *at one Instant*, to silence its own native Dread and Reluctance, and forcibly to burst asunder the strong and delicate Tie, which unites Body and Soul; should, *in the next*, sink, by a violent Effort of its own, feebly and ignobly down into a *mere Nothing*?—Such a Thought revolts against, and dishonours Thinking itself; nor can it be equalled in Absurdity by any other, but its Kindred *dark One*; viz. that *he who made all Things is Nothing*; or, which is tantamount to it, that *Nature is by ITSELF God*.—O no! whatever other Faculties and Powers the Soul may be possessed of, certainly it can possess none adequate to the Purpose of SELF-ANNIHILATION: For thus would the Soul *be*, and *cease to be*, at almost one and the same Instant: The Creature would also, by counteracting, baffling, and defeating God in the eternal Purposes of his own sovereign Self-existent Will, rise higher than its Creator, and invalidate all his Authority:—The very Attempt, that turned an *holy Angel* into a *Devil*!—(2 Thess. ii. 4. compared with Rev. xiii. 4. Isai. xiv. 13, 14.

The following Similitude may, perhaps, more than *illustrate* this great Point. A modern Philosopher, wise after the Manner of this World, but yet, perhaps, too high in his own Conceit; (1 Cor. iii. 18. viii. 1.) would doubtless laugh at the Folly of some plain Man, should he happen to espy him standing within side of a Boat, with the Rope or Chain affixed to its Head, in his Hand, and endeavouring, as such a poor innocent *Ignoramus* might do, to stop its Course on the Stream, by pulling it strongly the contrary Way towards himself. Thou Simpleton!—thinks our Philosopher, little dost thou imagine, that *Action* and *Re-action* in contrary Directions destroy each other; so that thou canst only discover the Greatness of thy own interior Strength,

Strength, by pulling at the Chain of the Boat, but effect Nothing to the Purpose of stopping its exterior Motion on the Stream.—And yet will this very wise Man do no less foolishly, should he, per-adventure, put forth strong Exertions to destroy his own *immortal* Soul: Which necessarily, all the While, standing with its whole Strength in God, (Col. i. 17. Acts xvii. 28.) must, under the Effort itself, rise superior to his own Design; so much the more evidently giving Proof of its own Existence, and Continuation of Life, (Luke xx. 38.) before the Eyes of God, and of every simple Believer in *Jesus*; who, in his deep Humility, is a *divine Philosopher* too: And he will also now, in his Turn, have Reason enough to *pity*, but cannot *despise* the *learned Ignorance* of such an inconsistent, and equally self-baffled Person, altho' an Adept in worldly Sciences.

Amongst all the Misfortunes incident to Man here, and by him pungently felt, his sad *Fall from God*, by taking up an opposite Will to him, is the Source and Aggregate of all the Rest, and of Course the greatest of all Evils. It can be exceeded by Nothing, but *that* yet invisible, and untried one to come, termed by our Lord and Saviour, (John iii. 15, 16.) “perishing;” (Chap. viii. 21, 24. 1 Cor. xv. 18.) “dying in our Sins;” (Matt. xvi. 26.) “Losing our Soul;” and, (Rev. xx. 6, 14.) “the second Death.” Effectually to prevent *which*,—(O Truth of Truths! O blessed Mystery of divine Love!) a Method worthy of God, a Provision the most ample and adequate, has been made in the adorable Person of our Lord and Saviour, *JESUS CHRIST*. *Who shall declare HIS Generation?* (Acts viii. 33.) *Mysterious* as it is, *HE is GOD manifest in the Flesh*. (1 Tim. iii. 16.) *In HIM are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*. (Col. ii. 3.) *In HIM all the Fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily*. (Ver. 9.) *In HIM are*
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all the Promises of God Yea, and in HIM Amen, unto the Glory of God. (2 Cor. i. 20.)—Hear HIM! said once the invisible God audibly from Heaven. (John i. 18. Chap. v. 37. vi. 46. Mark ix. 7.) Let HIM then speak for himself; and the Proclamation this divine Herald makes of GOD's Love is this: *As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in HIM should not PERISH, but have eternal Life. For God so loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in HIM should not PERISH, but have everlasting Life. For God sent not his Son into the World to condemn the World, but that the World through him might be saved.* (John iii. 16, 17.)—The following Texts speak the same Thing, and upon the same Love's Foundation. *The Lamb of God taketh away the Sin of the World.* (John i. 29.) *He gave himself a Ransom for all, a Testimony in due Time.* (1 Tim. ii. 6.) *God hath reconciled the World unto himself by Jesus Christ.* (2 Cor. v. 18, 19.) *We are not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold, from our vain Conversation received by Tradition from our Fathers; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot.* (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) *He is the Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World.* (1 John ii. 2.) *HE is the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey HIM, with the Obedience of FAITH.* (Heb. v. 9. Rom. xvi. 26.) *HE WAS dead; and behold! he is alive for evermore!* (Rev. i. 18.) *He ever liveth now to make Intercession for us.* (Heb. vii. 25.) *He will draw all Men unto himself.* (John xii. 32.) *He will save THEM to the uttermost, who come unto God by HIM.* (Heb. vii. 25.) *HE is a merciful and faithful High Priest, in Things pertaining to God, to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People.* (Heb. ii. 17.) *Through HIM we may come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy,*
and

and find Grace to help IN TIME OF NEED. (Heb. iv. 16.) He is, in one Word, all *that*, which in our sound Senses, we could, under our present fallen State, wish or desire for ourselves,—THE POOR DISTRESSED SINNER'S FRIEND. What *Sallust*, the Roman Historian, though with a good Degree of Compliment, ascribed to *Julius Cæsar*, calling him REFUGIUM MISERIS, (a Refuge for the Distressed) *that* is JESUS, in every Sense of the Words, and in the highest Degree of Reality.

How can we know ourselves aright, how value our own Mercies, if these inestimable Truths should ever be inapplicable, or dull and heavy to us!—They are everywhere interspersed, and comfortably season all the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament: They are written also by the Holy Ghost within the Hearts of a Cloud of Witnesses, as with *the Point of a Diamond*; (Jer. xvii. 1.) and, with a Sun-Beam: They therefore ought justly to claim the *whole* Attention, enkindle and recover Faith and Confidence in God, and engross for *him* all the Affections of every poor, sinful, and miserable Son and Daughter of *Adam* and *Eve*. It is a GOSPEL appropriate to the *Poor*; and especially to the *Poor in Spirit*, by *him*, who is *himself* the Sum and Substance of it. (Matt. v. 3. Chap. xi. 5.) The Poor are *his Jewels* on Earth. (Mal. iii. 17.) Nor can this GOSPEL, or such good Tidings of great Joy, which shall be to all People, in its Time, this Peace on Earth, and Good-Will towards Men, (Luke ii. 10, 14. Mark xiii. 10.) be hid, or veiled from any, but those, who (St. Paul says, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) are lost; in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them, who believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the IMAGE of GOD, should shine unto them. When any one (says our Saviour) heareth the WORD OF THE KINGDOM, and understandeth it not; then cometh the wicked One, and

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catcheth away THAT which was sown in his Heart, lest he should BELIEVE, AND BE SAVED. (Matt. xiii. 19. compared with Luke viii. 12.) In other Words, if a false Notion of, and a Pursuit after a chimerical Happiness, supposed to be attainable in the present evil World, without a full Recovery from the Fall;—if a blind Conceit of super-eminent fleshly Wisdom, and of a distinguishing Righteousness of our own, did not, in some Sort, render us too happy, too rich, too wise, and too righteous *out of Christ*, and *without* this invaluable Resource and Remedy;—Salvation, through Faith in Christ, could no sooner be proposed to any Man in the *effectual* Preaching of it by the Holy Ghost, but it would as naturally and easily flow into his Heart, as Water into any Aperture or Crevice; or Light through the Chamber-Window, *immediately* upon a Removal of the obstructing Curtain, or Shutter. *He that loveth Father or Mother* (says our Saviour, Matt. x. 37, 38.) *MORE than ME, is not WORTHY of me*; he is full already, he is no Subject capable of me. (Acts xiii. 46.) *And he that taketh not his Cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.* Let also our Saviour's own Rebuke, given to the Church of *Laodicea*, further evince, that the whole Obstruction to our Salvation by the Gospel of Jesus lies only in ourselves. *Thou art lukewarm,* (says he, Rev. iii. 16--20.) *I cannot relish thee: Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with Goods, and have Need of Nothing; and knowest not, in thy Heart, that thou art wretched, and miserable, (pitiable) and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of ME Gold tried in the Fire, that thou mayst be rich; and white Raiment, that thou mayst be clothed, and that the Shame of thy Nakedness do not appear: (Matt. xxii. 12.) And anoint thy Eyes with Eye-Salve, that thou mayst see.—Behold, I stand at the Door of thy Heart, and knock: If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door (remove, on his Part, or*
consent

consent only to the Removal of, all the above-mentioned *Obstructions*) *I* (who have so long been waiting without to be gracious to him) *will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.* (Can. v. 2.) Which likewise perfectly tallies with Joh. xiv. 21--23: Where also the *conditional* Form of Speech implies no more than the essentially-requisite Consent, on Man's Side, according to the prescribed Method of the Gospel; to have all the *Obstructions* to such a blessed Inhabitation, both of the Father and the Son, removed. *He that bath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him—If any Man love me, he will keep my Words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him.* In which Case, the Complaint of unentire Hearts, that the Lord is as a *Way-faring Man* to them, that *turneth aside to tarry for a Night* only, will cease; and he will then *abide with them for ever.* (Jer. xiv. 8. Joh. xiv. 16.)

This seeming Digression from my Subject of **SUICIDE** is however necessary; for, on Principles, like these, no where else to be had, but from *Scripture-Revelation*, and the Heart's true Experience of it; the **RELIGION** proper for Man is exalted much above *that*, which is *merely-rational* and natural; its Prospects extending themselves far, far above the dark Horizon of this wretched World. The Religion, grounded upon a *crucified Jesus*, *reconciling poor lost Sinners to himself*, as far transcends *that* of a **POMPOUS, PLEASUREABLE PUBLIC WORSHIP**, joined with mere **VIRTUE** and **MORALITY**, as Heaven transcends Earth, Spirit Matter, and God himself the whole Universe beside. The Religion of the Cross of Jesus, (but which, however, can only be preached, with any good Effect, in the Power of God, 1 Cor. i. 17, 25. Chap. ii. 1--5.) *crucifies*

all its true Votaries *with him*. (Gal. ii. 20. Chap. v. 24. vi. 14.) It calls for, awakens, and enkindles a *living FAITH*. (Rom. x. 17.) And this Faith is ever combined, *inseparably* combined with, and *works by Love* all the good and perfect Will of God. *It overcometh the World*, and all its ensnaring Lusts. (1 Joh. v. 4, 5.) It aboundeth in true good Works. (Eph. ii. 10. Tit. iii. 8.) It passeth through all the Goods and Evils, all the Changes and Chances of this mortal Life, in a *lively and patient Hope of Immortality*, at the *Appearing of Jesus Christ*; whom having not seen, it loves; in whom, though now it seeth him not, yet believing, it rejoiceth with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory; receiving already the End of its Faith, the *Salvation of the Soul*. (Tit. ii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 8, 9.)

Nor are these affectedly-pious, or overstrained good *Fancies*, but Heart-felt *Realities*.—Though, sadly true it is, that in these *last perilous Times*, we all, in general, are too deficient in them, having, alas! much more of the Form, than of the *Power of Godliness*: Otherwise would the slightest hearty, and real Consideration, and Meditation upon such precious Truths as these soon decide and settle the Question we have now under Hand. As Light discovers Darkness; so, of Course, would the Gospel, by its own native Light, soon detect the evil Nature, and demonstrate the dreadful Impropriety of that *rash Act* we commonly term *SUICIDE*.—For an Act it indeed is, offensive to God, injurious to our Neighbour, in every relative Capacity; and, to the Man himself, personally fatal and *rash* beyond every Degree of Comparison.

To write the same Things may be more *safe* for my Readers than *grievous*, in any Respect, to myself. (Phil. iii. 1.)—I repeat then, that deliberate, daring, and avowed *SUICIDE* can have no Shadow of *rational* Plea made for it, but on an *ATHEISTICAL*, or *DEISTICAL HYPOTHESIS* of *Materialism*. It must therefore

therefore flee before the Gospel of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, as Vapours and Mists naturally flee before the Face of the rising Sun. The Gospel is an Antidote against all the Poison of the Fall in every Degree. The GOSPEL of our Lord *Jesus Christ* is no *cunningly-devised Fable*, (2 Pet. i. 16.) but positive and ESSENTIAL TRUTH itself; whereas DEISM, the direct Opposite, is a mere *Negative* and a LIE; and all its pretended *Merit* (whatever *Merit* it may pretend to) lies merely in rallying the *Counterfeit*, or *false, nominal Christianity*.—And thus may one EXTREME easily censure another, whilst Truth itself lies neglected between them both.—Now the Abettors of SUICIDE, amongst their other *vain* Imaginations, take for granted, that some incidental State of Misery in this Life might chance to become both *intolerable* in itself, and *absolutely unalterable*, by any other possible Means but by the Extinction of that *Life*, in which, as their Subject, all Pains, as well as Pleasures, subsist and reside. Of Consequence, that thus, in the impatient Rage of our Spirit, we ought *doughtily* to treat such a precious Gift of Life, though bestowed upon us by God himself, with as little Ceremony as commonly we do an aking Tooth, or a mortified Member; viz. by an immediate Extraction of the one, and an Amputation of the other.

But, under *this* Representation of the Case, there is as little Justness of Comparison, whether in Kind, or Degree, as Truth of Fact.—Does an aking Tooth, or even a mortified Limb bear any just Proportion to *Life* itself?—Or, will any wise Man choose to part with either Tooth or Limb, till, being found incurable, all HOPE from every *other* Quarter is wholly cut off? Which also, as a *Truth of Fact*, can never take Place with any Man, till it could be clearly ascertained, (which never can be done) that the Grace of God in *Christ* could not
over-

over-rule Nature, and make all Things work together for Good, to them that love God, &c. (Rom. viii. 28.) For, since the Promise of a Seed of the Woman, which is to bruise the Serpent's Head; (Gen. iii. 15.) and, now more especially, since the actual Incarnation and Death of Christ, who is that very Seed, we have seen it in a good Degree already effected; God has been uniformly faithful, so as never to suffer any Person to be tempted ABOVE THAT HE IS ABLE; but will, with the Temptation, also make a Way to escape, that he may be able to BEAR it. (1 Cor. x. 13.) Blessed is therefore the Man, that endureth Temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. (Jam. i. 12.) Behold, we count them happy, who ENDURE, &c. (Chap. v. 11.) Our light Affliction, WHICH IS BUT FOR A MOMENT, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. (2 Cor. iv. 17.) God's Anger endureth BUT A MOMENT---Weeping may endure for a NIGHT, but Joy cometh in the Morning. (Psal. xxx. 5.) We have not an High-Priest, who cannot be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities; but was in all Points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin. We MAY therefore, we OUGHT to come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help IN TIME OF NEED. (Heb. iv. 15, 16.) And thus, we cannot be sure, that our Afflictions, how grievous so ever for the present, shall be either quite intolerable, or ceaseless. Much are we encouraged to believe the contrary; and to entertain a well-grounded HOPE of Mitigation, and perfect Deliverance, in the Lord's own good Way and Time; if, in Faith, we keep the Word of our blessed Lord's Patience firm unto the End. (Heb. x. 35--39. xii. 11. Rev. iii. 10.)

Should then the Heart of Man, were he ever so guilty, and ever so miserable, not be too PROUD and STUBBORN to bear the Rod, and him, who

who hath appointed it, (Micah vi. 9.) to humble itself under the mighty Hand of God, (1 Pet. v. 6.) to bow the Knee at the Name of JESUS; and with the Tongue (from the Heart) to confess, that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the Glory of God the Father; (Rom x. 10. Phil. ii. 10, 11.) looking immediately and alone unto HIM, by Faith, for Pardon, Peace, and every good Thing;—then can no Extremity of Pain, or bad Habitudes either of Body or Soul, become so violent and confirmed as to be Proof against this infallible LENITIVE, and irresistible ALTERATIVE, given to poor Sinners with the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ; himself the best of Physicians too, the Physician both for Body and Soul. (Exod. xv. 26. Psal. cxlvii. 3.)

But SUICIDE (supposing human Sufferings to be ever so intolerable, and unalterable in this Life) is, after all, a Remedy, not only ineffectual, but far worse than the Disease itself. We may, sure enough, by Self-Murder, put a Period to bodily Life and its Pains; but, as we have already shewn, not to *Existence* itself. The Soul must of Necessity still survive, and remain in *another* unknown State; where, according to Scripture, and sound Reason, the Anguish of the Mind will most certainly be rather aggravated than mitigated; and that INSTANTLY; for absurdly fictitious, and highly delusive is the supposed SLEEP of the Soul till the general Resurrection. *Fear not them* (says our Saviour) *who kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul; but rather fear him, who is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell.* (Matt. x. 28.) And again, *Fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath Power to cast into HELL.* (Luke xii. 5.) That this State of the Soul's Sensibility ensues immediately upon the Dissolution of Soul and Body, the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19--31) throughout evinces; but more particularly Ver. 22, 23, 27, 28,

28, &c. Also what our blessed Saviour says, (Luke xxiii. 43. and 2 Cor. xii. 4.) *To-Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* And St. Paul declares an *Absence from the Body* an immediate *Presence with the Lord.* (2 Cor. v. 1, &c. Phil. i. 22--25.)—But *what* that State is which our Saviour calls *Casting into Hell*, he in other Places explains sufficiently; telling us (Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.) with a threefold Repetition, that *THERE their Worm dieth not, and their Fire is not quenched.* And (Matt. xxii. 13.) *There shall be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth.* For all *those, who are DEAD to Men, are still ALIVE unto God; they all, without Interruption, or Cessation of Life, live unto HIM;* (Luke xx. 38.) either like the *Rich Glutton, in HELL;* or like *Lazarus, in ABRAHAM'S BOSOM.*

If therefore, in Disdain of, and Despite shewn to God's most gracious, only-true, and infallible Remedy provided against *all* Evil, we should foolishly and rashly prefer a *chimerical* Extinction of our own Existence; we then, upon a Trial never to be repeated, never to be redressed, cannot but find ourselves sadly mistaken, and trepanned by our grand, crafty Enemy into a *new* Species of Misery in another State, or Life; which, how pungent and intolerable so ever, (witness the *Rich Glutton's Torments*, (Luke xvi. 23--31) no farther Expedient of *SUICIDE*, or otherwise, would be able to alter, mitigate, or extricate us from. For whatever the *future* State may prove to be to us, happy or unhappy; having been once, by the good and unchangeable Will of God, brought into Existence, our Continuance therein must be indefeasible; that all the *eternal* Purposes of his *creating* and *redeeming* Love may be, sooner or later, fulfilled. How should we then *cease to be?*—As the unbeginning and never-ending God and *Father of our Spirits*, (Heb. xii. 9.) the Giver of the Life therein resident, could only bestow;

bestow; so surely can none other but himself ever take it away from us again:—And to suppose that He *could*, or *would* do it, implies either the Absurdity of framing an *Omnipotence* destructive of its own divine Nature; or a Blasphemy, no less than to aver, that the all-perfect Deity, with whom there is *no Variableness, or Shadow of Turning*, (Jam. i. 17.) is as liable to Fickleness and Inconstancy as we short-sighted fallen Men are found to be. Against this, *Balaam*, over-ruled by the Spirit of God, testifies: *God is not a MAN that he should lie, neither the SON OF MAN, that he should REPENT, &c.* (Num. xxiii. 19.) which, in other Words, is only to say, that the all-harmonious Deity *cannot* act in direct Opposition to his own *invariable* divine Order; which would be to counter-act, and destroy himself.—A fictitious, strange Kind of SUICIDE indeed!—On all the abovesaid Grounds therefore, it may well be said, That *vain* is the IMAGINATION, *absurd* and *impious* the EXPRESSION, and *utterly unavailable* the EFFORT, made by any *dependent Creature*, to PUT AN END TO IT'S OWN EXISTENCE.

For, considering ourselves as *Creatures*, (to all Eternity, necessarily and totally *dependent* upon the sovereign SELF-EXISTENT Being of all Beings) SUICIDE cannot but be considered as an *impious*, and *daring* Attack upon the exclusive Rights, and incommunicable Prerogatives of the MAJESTY of MAJESTIES.—He only could *give* us a SOUL, and he will as certainly *continue* the Life and Existence therein resident. The Words of the Son of his Love, *speaking what he knew, and testifying what he had seen*, (John iii. 11.) are here very apposite, important, and decisive: *As the FATHER hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the SON to have Life in himself.* (John v. 26. Chap. vi. 57.) HE ONLY hath Immortality, &c. (1 Tim. vi. 16.) in this Self-existent and Self-subsistent Way.

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For, however the cool Defender, and daring Perpetrator of this high Crime and Misdemeanor may qualify and palliate the Matter to himself by *vain Reasonings*; yet can such *Subtilties* of Reason never alter the *real* Nature of Things. By the very *Act*, a Man proudly and rebelliously flies in the Face of his God; thereby in Effect attempting, to wrest the Sceptre out of the omnipotent Hand of the *Universal SOVEREIGN*; who is, withal, the true *Father of his immortal Spirit*. It seems to be one of the highest Instances, whereby the Creature can wish to invade the Rights, and traverse the Will of its Creator; and it has in it an undutiful, as well as an ungrateful Disposition, enhanced in its Pravity proportionably to the *Goodness* of that Will.—A Procedure this more aggravated in a CHRISTIAN Country; because the Delinquent cannot, if he would, be quite insensible, that there is not only a divine *Mandate*, but even a gracious *Invitation* given to the MISERABLE to seek a *present* Redress, and in its Time, a *consummate* Deliverance, from *all* Evil here and hereafter, by a believing Resignation, and a patient Hope in the never-failing Mercy and Compassion of a *crucified Redeemer*. *How shall we then escape, if we neglect, and despise, so great a Salvation?* (Heb. ii. 3.) Surely no Height of *Genius*, no Subtilty in the Way of Reasoning, can exculpate; no Stretch, even of Christian Charity itself, can promise Impunity to the *premeditated* Audacity and Ingratitude of such every Day increasing *Apostates* from the Faith of JESUS.

It may easily be observed, that hitherto I have mostly treated of SUICIDE, as a Sin against *God*, and *Oneself*; but the just Rights of Society, and of our *Neighbour*, in every relative Capacity, must by no Means be left out of the Accompt. Let the complicated Distress, the sad Confusion, and the pernicious Example in the Family, Place, and State,

State, where such a rash Act takes Place, be considered too.—Let Wives bewailing their dear Husbands, and Husbands their Wives, Parents their Children, and Children their Parents, intimate Friends their Friends, Neighbour his Neighbour, and the State its great Officers and Pillars, form the sorrowful Group;—and, all together will complete such a *Tragical* Picture, as the most indifferent Person, in his sound Senses, could not cast the slightest Eye upon, without Horror and an aking, bleeding Heart.—

Yes, the mere Exhibition of it before the untinged Eye of *Conscience*, and common Sense, must needs, by the first genuine Feelings it excites, self-evidently evince *SUICIDE* to be, not only a Sin, as well against our *Neighbour*, as against *God*, and *our Own-selves*; but one too of the first Magnitude. §

Yet what *Excuse*, what *Extenuation* of its Guilt are justly admissible under Cases of *invincible Ignorance*, or of uncommonly over-whelming, and over-bearing *Distress*, and of *real* pitiable *Insanity*; is beyond my Design, and even Ability, minutely and exactly to ascertain and determine, in this Place. All Sin is Sin, and as such, must necessarily be

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attended

§ Very remarkable it is, that in every Instance of *SUICIDE* occurring in the Bible; as of *Saul*, *Ahitophel*, and *Judas Iscariot*, they were all plainly bad Men:—Whereas, if *SUICIDE* had been a Thing *lawful* in itself, *Job*, and other afflicted *SAINTS*, whose Lives became a Burden to them, (Chap. iii. 20--24, &c.) would, one or other, have been probably found in the Practice of it.

As to the Case of *Sampson*, (Judg. xvi. 30.) He was a *mixed* Character; though, upon the Whole, and especially at the Close of his Life, not altogether unworthy of standing upon the List with other *Heroes of Faith*. (Heb. xi. 32.)

Let us farther see what Bp. *Patrick* writes upon the Place:

“ *Sampson* is not to be thought properly a *SELF-MURDERER*: “ for he was moved by an heroical Spirit from God himself, to “ make himself a Sacrifice (as I may call it) for the Good of his “ Country: And it is no more than great Soldiers do; who are “ content to lose their Lives in Defence of a Post where they are “ placed, for the Preservation of the Army, to which they belong.” See *Grotius*, in his Book *De Jure Belli and Pacis*, Lib. 2. Cap. 19. Sect. 5. N. 4.

attended with conscious Guilt;* but *premeditated* and *wilful* Sins will certainly feel a larger Share of it than others of mere Inadvertency, Precipitation, and Surprize. The former are approved beforehand, and vindicated afterwards, on Principle; the latter, being little apprehended, come often upon us at an Unawares, and are always inwardly condemned. However, in this, and in every other Case, we are sure *the Judge of all the Earth will DO RIGHT.* (Gen. xviii. 25.) The Manner of this just and equitable Judge's future Procedure is, among many other, clearly discernible by the general Rule, or *Specimen*, laid down in the following Words, (Luke xii. 47, 48.) *The Servant (says he) who knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes: But he that knew not, and did commit Things worthy of Stripes, shall be beaten with few Stripes: For unto whomsoever MUCH is given, of him shall MORE be required; and to whom MEN have committed MUCH, of HIM will they ask the MORE.* This is said, and is, according to *strict Justice*.—But, in Point of *Equity* too, the Saviour's kind and merciful Disposition for excusing and extenuating the greatest Sins of *Ignorance*, and *Infirmity*, is in Nothing more conspicuous than by the Intercession he made in Behalf of his very *Crucifiers*; when, under the greatest of all Injuries, he hung bleeding on the Cross: *Father, (says he) forgive them, for they KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.* (Luke xxiii. 34.)—Now, though there was no Ground of Truth sufficient *wholly* to excuse, yet was there one, that his compassionate Heart could lay hold of, to *extenuate* even this atrocious Outrage offered to his *own* innocent Person; for (adds he) *they know not what they do!*—Verily they *did not*. St. Paul, who himself *had heretofore been a Blasphemer, a Persecutor and injurious*, whilst in similar *Ignorance and Unbelief*, (1 Tim. i. 13.) tells us,

(1 Cor.

* Extemplo quodcunque malum committitur ipsi
Displicet auctori—Juv.

(1 Cor. ii. 6, 8.) that the adorable Wisdom of the Cross, was *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery*, which NONE OF THE PRINCES OF THIS WORLD KNEW; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. With this doth St. Peter likewise accord, when (Acts iii. 14--18.) he says, Ye (Jews, with your Rulers) *denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a Murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of Life—And now, Brethren, I wot that THROUGH IGNORANCE ye did it, as did also YOUR RULERS—Repent ye therefore, &c.* For the Validity of which a good Ground had been laid, not only when, on the Cross, our Saviour made the above-mentioned *Intercession for the Transgressors*; (Isai. liii. 12.) but also by his so frequently repeated Doctrine of *loving, praying for, and forgiving Enemies*: (Matt. v. 44. Chap. vi. 14, 15.) and more especially still, when he enjoined his Apostles, to *preach Remission of Sins, IN HIS NAME, among all Nations*; beginning even at JERUSALEM, the very Place of his Rejection, and Crucifixion. (Luke xxiv. 47. Acts xiii. 27.)

The Case of SUICIDE bears some Affinity with this: For, like the barbarous Crucifixion of the innocent and patient Son of God, in Person, it is, in a Sort, to *crucify Him to Oneself afresh*, when the rash Self-Murderer wounds and destroys *the Image of God* in himself. (Heb. vi. 6. compared with Gen. ix. 6.) If therefore a daring and avowed Spirit of *Malignity* could aggravate, or a pitiable State of Ignorance and Infirmary extenuate the former; so may it the latter Crime likewise:—Only, in the Case of SUICIDE, there is the *peculiar* and distinguishing Difference of its being mostly incapable of being followed by a sincere and true Repentance, on this Side the Grave.

Now, since every *Phænomenon*, or Effect, either in the *moral or natural World*, cannot be without

its proper Ground, or adequate *Cause*; a further Enquiry might, perhaps, be here profitably instituted into *that* of the much to be lamented *Motive* to, and so of the *Frequency* of SUICIDE, in these modern Times; and especially in our own Nation.—The Cause of LIBERTY, both *Civil* and *Religious*, has been much pleaded of late; and no where, perhaps, more cordially and diffusively than amongst us:—And it must also be allowed to be a precious Gift of God:—But then, like all other *good*, and even the *best* Things, it is equally liable to be employed to a *bad* and to the *worst*, as well as to a *good*, and to the *best*, Purpose. For my own Person, long have I been convinced, that, as its *good Use* will eventually open the Way to a Restoration of pure, and *Primitive Christianity*, as at the Day of *Pentecost*; so will its *Abuse* give Birth and Growth to a *consummate State* of INFIDELITY in Principle, and consequent Profligacy in Practice. The few, who *love the Lord Jesus Christ and his Truth in Sincerity*, are wishing and praying for the former; and the many, who *believe not the Truth, but have Pleasure in Unrighteousness*, (2 Thess. ii. 10--13.) wish equally for, and strenuously endeavour to promote the latter. The Case is, through all Christendom, at this Day, before our Eyes; but more perceptibly and conspicuously in our own Nation. This *Abuse of Liberty to Licentiousness* is then the fertile Soil, which produces SUICIDE, and produces it in such Plenty; but more especially that deliberate and daring *Species* of it, which is adopted, maintained, and perpetrated upon Principle, and Argumentation, against the revealed Will of God, as well as against all good Sense and sober Reason.

What the Apostle *Paul* observes, in the first and second Chapters of his Epistle to the *Romans*, in Respect to the then State both of *Heathens* and *Jews*, is exactly the Case with *Deists*, and merely *nominal Disciples*

Disciples of Christ in this our Day too. No sooner is THAT which may be known of God, and is manifest in us, having been by God himself shewn unto the Conscience, (Rom. i. 19.) held, or detained in Unrighteousness; and, from a Dislike of retaining God in our Knowledge, (Ver. 28.) suppressed, and its saving Grace, and Light extinguished; but we must inevitably be given over to a REPROBATE MIND; to vain Imaginations, to a foolish and hardened Heart, to an indiscriminating Sense, and a seared Conscience; so as to do with Greediness, (Eph. iv. 19.) those Things, which are not convenient, however atrocious Sins they may, in their own Nature, be. In which Case, whether, like the Heathens of old, we live under an unwritten Law of Nature; or, like the ancient Jews, under a written one; the Effect will, in both Cases, be pretty much the same: Like them, we may vie with, and despise one another; but both are sadly out of the Way of Truth, and Peace. Hence then the modern Dissoluteness both in Principle and Practice; which prevails with such an Equipoise, that the nicest Distinguisher would find it hard to decide, whether INFIDELITY be, in our Days, more the PARENT of PROFLIGACY, or PROFLIGACY of INFIDELITY: Though one Thing is however too clear and certain, that they both work faithfully into each other's Hands; every where spreading their baleful Influence in such a Manner, as to threaten an universal Deluge of Sin and Wickedness, similar to that before the Flood, and to that of Sodom and Gomorrah.—Which undeniable State of Things sadly verifies and exemplifies St. Paul's Pre-monition concerning the last perilous Times; when, under a Form of Godliness denying its Power, worse than Heathen and Jewish Vices would reign triumphant among Christians; (2 Tim. iii. 1--5.) during which also Scoffers should come, walking after their own Lusts, and saying, where

is the Promise of our Saviour's second Coming, &c. ?
(2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.)

In a Situation like this, and so plainly accomplished ; considering, withal, the late awful *Appearances* of NATURE, both in Heaven above, on the Sea, and on the Earth beneath ; why should the pious and respectable *Discerner of the Signs of the Time* (Luke xii. 56.) be dubbed for a vapoured and gloomy ENTHUSIAST, if the extremely applicable and monitory Words of our Saviour, (Luke xvii. 26--30) and the many other such like, affect him so deeply, as to influence his Conduct, and to become so indelible as hardly ever to be got out of his Heart and Mind ?—Read them, dear Reader, read them with *Mary's* Ponderings in her Heart. (Luke ii. 19.)

As it was in the Days of Noe, so shall it be ALSO in the Days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married Wives, and they were given in Marriage, until the Day that Noe entered into the Ark, and the Flood came and destroyed THEM ALL.—LIKEWISE ALSO, as it was in the Days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded :—But the same Day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained Fire and Brimstone out of Heaven, and destroyed THEM ALL :—EVEN THUS shall it be in the Day when the Son of Man is revealed.--- And again, (Matt. xxiv. 44.) In such an Hour as ye THINK NOT, the Son of Man cometh. At MIDNIGHT there was a Cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him ! (Chap. xxv. 6.) You yourselves know perfectly, (says St. Paul, 1 Thess. v. 2--4.) that the Day of the Lord so cometh, as a Thief in the Night : For when they shall say, PEACE AND SAFETY, then SUDDEN Destruction cometh upon them, as Travail upon a Woman with Child, and they shall not ESCAPE.--- Surely (might one think) in vain is the Net spread in the Sight of any Bird. (Prov. i. 17.) For no Words can convey a more Signal Warning than is here given ;

given; or one with greater Emphasis inculcated upon all Times, all Nations, and all Persons, from that Day to this. (Mark xiii. 35--37. Luke xxi. 34--36.)

But yet, amidst such evident and glaring *Signs of the Times*, amidst the strange foreboding Disorders of the *Natural*, the *Moral*, the *Civil*, and the *Ecclesiastical* World; when nothing less than *the good, the acceptable, and the perfect Will of God*, is, in general, known, wished for, and done; how should the blessed *Doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament* be known, whether it be of God, or whether he spoke of himself? (Rom. xii. 2. John vii. 17.) How then should we rightly and solidly know, what God is;—what Man is;—whence he cometh, and whither he is going;—what the World about him was at first, is now, and shall again be;—what is Man's *Chief Good*;—and what, in the Pursuit of it, is incumbent upon him, before all other Things:—And how all must wind up, at last, to the Glory of the great Creator? When a *good Conscience towards God*, the only true Ground and Basis of his Fear and Love, and of all the *Reality* of Religion, (1 Tim. i. 5.) is silenced, ridiculed, and extinguished, how should any *sound Knowledge* prevail? (Psal. xxv. 14.) How should not SUICIDE, with its Twin-Sister DUELING, and every other horrid *Species* of MURDER prevail, both in Principle and Practice? How should not a perfect Inundation of Sin and Wickedness break through, and overflow all the Dams, Mounds, and Barriers, which human Precaution and Ingenuity, backed and enforced by all the Terror of the Laws, have ever yet been able to oppose to its desolating and distressful Progress?—A *radical and effectual REMEDY* for the Evil of the Times, is therefore still the grand *Desideratum*, if the Earth we live upon is not, by Degrees, to be at last converted into a Sort of Hell. If the *twelve Tribes of Israel, serving God Day and Night, hoped to come to the Promise*

Promise made of God unto their Fathers; (Acts xxvi. 6, 7.) which they also, in a good degree, obtained at the first Coming of our blessed Lord in the Flesh; how much more should not we, (who, pursuant to repeated Promise, are at this Day looking for him in Faith) long for, and hasten on his Appearance the SECOND Time, without Sin unto Salvation? (Heb. ix. 28. 2 Pet. iii. 12.) Now the Enemy is come in like a Flood, we earnestly beseech the LORD to lift up a Standard against him. (Isai. lix. 19, 20.) The secret Language and Aspirations of our Hearts are, Come out of Sion, O thou great Deliverer, and turn away Ungodliness from our Jacob! (Rom. xi. 26.) May HE, at length, soon send his Messenger, the ELIAS-SPIRIT of these last Times, to prepare the Way before him! (Mal. iii. 1. iv. 5, 6.) For, encouraged by the Word and Promise of God, and instigated by their own, and by the Exigencies of the Times, such an extraordinary Witness, or Witnesses of the ancient Stamp and Spirit, have many learned and good, sober and solid Divines, as well as a greater Number of plain and truly-pious Christians of every Denomination, been long wishing and waiting for. And He, or THEY, like the Apostle Paul of old, will not, when they come, be ashamed of the GOSPEL OF CHRIST; which, in its original Purity of Doctrine, and Simplicity of Spirit, will again be found the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth it, with the Heart; as once heretofore to the Jew and Greek, so now at this Day to nominal Christians, reasoning Deists, and to all Heathen Nations. For therein is THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD still to be revealed from Faith to Faith. (Rom. i. 16, 17.)

And, as *this* was God's last and best Remedy, at the Fulness of the Time, almost eighteen Centuries since; so will not any less effectual one than the Renewal of it now answer the Exigencies of our Times and State of Things, after so long a DEGENERACY.

Very

Very remarkable and encouraging is it also in this Respect, that, previous to the *Downfal* of this *Antitypical*, and *Antichristian* BABYLON, (and doubtless as one considerable Mean towards the Bringing it about, (Rev. xiv. 6, 7. xviii. 1.) shall the EVER-LASTING GOSPEL be preached unto them that dwell on the Earth, and to every Nation, and Kindred, and Tongue and People. The Sum and Substance of which is, that because the Hour of God's Judgment, the Judgment of the great Whore of Degeneracy, (Rev. xix. 2.) to be effected instrumentally by the proper and individual ANTICHRIST, (1 John ii. 18. Rev. xvii. 16, 17. 2 Thes. ii. 3.) is come; and the ensuing Abomination of Desolation in the total Apostacy (announced and ushered in with a loud Voice of the third following Angel), ~~she~~ near to be set up;--- IDOLATRY of every Kind, whether literal or spiritual, secret or open, should, in the Fear of the true God, be turned from; and all Glory given to HIM alone; by worshipping (in Spirit and in Truth) HIM, that made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and the Fountains of Waters. (Ver. 8--12. Isai. ii. 17--22. Rev. vi. 12-17.)

One should think also, that the evident and acknowledged *Inefficacy* and *Insufficiency* of all ordinary Remedies, and otherwise *laudable* Means of Grace hitherto, ought justly to excite in all the *honest* and *good* Hearts (Luke viii. 15.) of every *Christian* Nation and Denomination, so much the more ardent Desires after the *healing* Wings of the Sun of Righteousness HIMSELF.* (Mal. iv. 2. Ps. cxix. 126.) *Thy Kingdom come! Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven!* are Heart's Aspirations and Petitions, dictated to us by SOBRIETY itself. Surely then must the DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS be himself in true and perfect Unison with such a Desire, in what Heart soever found. (Matt. vi. 10. Hag. ii. 7. Rev. xxii. 7, 17, 20.)

And let it, withal, be well observed, that by the
Preaching

Preaching of the everlasting Gospel, as the grand Mean to this very necessary and most desirable End, no mere System of particular Opinions, no undue Zeal for the SHIBBOLETH, or Peculiarity of this or that divided Church, Sect, or Denomination, is here meant; but the living, genuine WORD OF GOD *itself*, the TESTIMONY OF GOD *himself*; so as, from the Mouths and Pens of the Apostles, and all their true Successors, *when baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire*, (Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4, 5.) it divinely evinced Jesus, the CRUCIFIED JESUS, to be the CHRIST, the SON of the LIVING GOD.---A Word, which where-ever it came, produced, both *within* and *without*, such wonderful Effects, as justly claim our Admiration to this very Day. All other Doctrines, short of *this*, with all Volumes of Controversies, how exquisitely soever framed and managed, will be found to be mere Cobwebs and Patch-Work, in Comparison of *it*: As the most shining Gifts and Talents will also be found like a *sounding Brass*, or a *tinkling Cymbal*; unless they are derived from that *one* and the *self-same Spirit* of JESUS; which *worketh all, and divideth*, in the Church, to every Man severally, as HE WILL. (1 Cor. xiii. 1. xii. 11.) For as, at the Day of Pentecost, *this Spirit* was the Beginner, the Continuer, and the Finisher of every Thing done in the Church of God; so must it again be the same, without any Competition and Mixture, though offered under the most plausible Pretexts, and even pious Appearances. (Acts v. 4. 2 Cor. xi. 13--15.) Every Thing else will, at best, only leave us where it found us; carrying in itself the Confutation of its own Pretensions, by the abortive Effect.---But THIS will make Christians again speak the same Thing; end all Divisions, and join them perfectly together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment. (1 Cor. i. 10. John xvii. 21--23.)

To return, however, from a Digression my Subject has inadvertently led the Zeal of my Heart into; and

to

to sum up all: Thus then, on *Epicurean* and *Stoical* Principles, or even on those of modern INFIDELITY, some Sort of rational and plausible Plea might, perhaps, be made for the Lawfulness, and even for the Expediency of an *occasional* SUICIDE:---But, if the Revelation of the Will of God, by the GOSPEL of his Son *Jesus Christ*, be taken into the Accompt; and were it *effectually* to operate upon the Heart, by Faith and Confidence in it, as Truth so important and interesting may justly challenge;---then will SUICIDE self-evidently appear to be the *frightful Monster* it really is. It will appear to be, not only an extremely *rash Act*, and an *unavailing Attempt*; but also one most *presumptuous*, and *arrogant*; a very *heinous Crime and Misdemeanor*, committed against the *Sovereign Deity*, and *Father of Spirits*; a grievous Injury done to our *Neighbour*; and a still more fatal One to *our Ourselves*. The rebellious Defender, and daring Perpetrator of it will be seen to *stretch thereby his Hands out against God*, and to *strengthen himself against the Almighty*; *running upon him, even on his Neck, upon the thick Bosses of his Bucklers*. (Job xv. 25, 26.) Instead of humbly, patiently, and submissively fleeing in his Distress, by Faith, to *Christ*, as the *Refuge, sure and steadfast, set before him*, and as the *Panacea*, or universal Remedy against all Evil; the Self-Murderer, in Unbelief, in the blind and desperate Rage of his fallen Nature, makes a presumptuous and irreversible Appeal to one of the most fatal of all Lies and Delusions; and will find himself miserably cheated, and trepanned by that *Old Serpent*; who, having in the Beginning, deceived, still, to this very Day, goeth on to *deceive the whole World*. (Rev. xii. 9.)

But the very Truth, and the only Ground of solid Hope, on the other Hand, is, that however we may be attacked and besieged by Guilt and Misery, *the Name of the Lord JESUS is a strong Tower*; into which the *Righteous*, by Faith, may flee and be safe. (Prov.

(Prov. xviii. 10.) *It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that JESUS CHRIST came into the World to save Sinners; ay, the Chief of Sinners.* (1 Tim. i. 15.) Which kind Overture, and precious, indefeasible Charter of Grace is (Heb. vi. 17--19.) farther signed, sealed, and ratified by the Word, and Oath of God. God (says the Author of that Epistle) *willing more abundantly to shew to the Heirs of Promise, (who are ever, at the first, poor, contrite, and trembling Sinners) the Immutability of his Counsel (to save them freely, and to the uttermost) confirmed it by an Oath, that by two immutable Things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have* A STRONG CONSOLATION, WHO HAVE FLED FOR REFUGE, (Num. xxxv. 6, &c.) *to lay Hold upon the HOPE set before us: WHICH HOPE we have as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast, &c.*

And finally, what our dear, and blessed Saviour once uttered audibly with his own divine Lips when here on Earth, *that is he still speaking, by his Holy Spirit, from Heaven, to the inward Ears, or within the Hearts, of all poor self-convicted Sinners.* (Heb. xii. 25. Matt. xi. 28--30.) *Come unto ME, all ye that labour, and are heavy-laden, and I will give you REST. Take MY Yoke upon you, and learn of ME; for I am meek, and lowly in Heart, and ye shall find Rest unto your Souls: For MY Yoke is easy, and MY Burden is light.*

And again, by his Evangelical Prophet, (Isai. lv. 3.) *Incline your Ear and come unto ME; hear, and your Soul shall live.*

And thus, *whatsoever Things were written aforetime were written for our Learning, that we, through Patience and Comfort of the SCRIPTURES, might have HOPE; with which no Sort of SUICIDE, whether daringly premeditated, or unhappily precipitated, can possibly consist.* (Rom. xv. 4.)

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